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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF HOME ECONOMICS  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Points to be Considered in the Selection of a Washing Machine

In selecting a washing machine the following points should be considered: (1) its cleansing ability, (2) the length of time and the amount of electricity consumed in securing maximum cleansing, (3) the amount of wear on the clothes, (4) the design and construction with relation to (a) safety, (b) durability, (c) convenience of operation, (d) ease and cost of servicing, (e) whether or not there is marked vibration to cause either excessive noise or wear on the machine, (5) the capacity, and (6) the relation of initial cost and operating cost to these considerations and to the family budget.

The cleansing ability of a machine is often achieved at the expense of excessive wear on the clothes or with an undue expenditure of time and electric energy. A compromise between these factors is usually necessary.

Most machines on the market today are based on the principle of securing cleansing through agitation of both the water and the clothes in the water by means of an oscillating agitator device attached in the center of the bottom of the tub. This agitator usually has three or four vanes or wings, increasing in size toward the bottom, and the shape varying in different machines. In one of the most recent models these vanes are spiral on the principle that this reduces the wear on the clothes. This model is too new for any test data to be available as to the success of this idea but the reasoning seems sound.

A second type of machine is one which secures the movement of the water through the clothes by means of vacuum cups which revolve at the same time they move up and down, thus achieving cleansing action by suction as well as by agitation.

The vacuum cup type machines rank highest in cleansing action and are not unduly hard on clothes. Some machines of the gyrator type may excel those with the vacuum cups in the question of small wear on clothes, but this differs very markedly with the type of gyrator. The vacuum cup type machines take a longer time than some of the gyrator type machines to secure maximum cleansing, so one's choice must be made on the basis of what the emphasis is to be laid on, the saving of time or the cleansing ability with reference to the wear on the clothes.

The present tendency in the better machines is to cover all moving parts. Covering the motor is a help toward greater durability since it is thereby protected from injury from dust, spillage of water, or from excessive oiling. There should also be a manufacturer's guarantee as to safety from shock hazard.

For convenience the machine should be of as light weight as is consistent with sturdiness of construction so that it can be moved easily, and it should be supplied with casters to expedite this. The switches or controls should be located close to one another, and at such a height as to prevent stooping on the part of the operator, and in size and shape should be such that the machine is easy to manage even with wet hands.

The machine should have a good record for durability and the construction should be such that the parts most subject to repair are easily accessible. It is unwise to select a machine which cannot be serviced in your immediate locality.

The capacity of washing machines is graded in terms of water capacity, or of the number of pounds of clothes or, in some cases, of the number of sheets it will hold at one time. Nine pounds of clothes, or twenty gallons of water is considered a large capacity for family use, but eight pounds of clothes is more common for a large family machine. A capacity of six pounds of clothes is considered a small family machine. The price increases with increased capacity.

There seems to be a very strong feeling on the part of some people that the power wringer, from the point of view of safety, is too hazardous a proposition to be considered at all when selecting a washing machine. These people recommend buying either a spinner dryer or a hand wringer since the accidents that occur with the power wringer are of too serious a nature to justify taking the risk involved.

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